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SENSITIVE

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR, PM, AF

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TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [XY](#) [IT](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: ITALIAN MFA REQUESTS USG ASSISTANCE IN
FACILITATING EXCHANGE OF DIPLOMATIC NOTES FOR PARTICIPATION
IN US-LED MILITARY EXERCISE IN AFRICA

REF: A. IIR 6 850 0389 05

[1](#)B. IIR 6 850 0184 05

[1](#)1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 7.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Summary. To ensure Italian participation in an upcoming U.S.-led military exercise in West Africa, the Italian MFA has asked for USG assistance in paving the way for Italy to conclude bilateral status of forces-type agreements with the five host countries involved. In addition to the benefits that will be accrued by the African participants, MFA and MOD officials view the exercise as an excellent opportunity for joint training with U.S. troops and for improving cooperation between their own forces. End summary.

[1](#)3. (U) At the MFA's request, Pol-Mil Officer and Air Attache attended an August 24 meeting at the MFA to discuss Italy's participation in the West African Training Cruise exercise scheduled to begin October 1. (See paragraph 6 for background information.) Italian participants in the meeting included MFA NATO Office Director Giovanni Brauzzi, NATO Desk Officer Pier Mario Dacco, J-3 Officer Captain Giovanni Gumiero and Dr. Beatrice Macchia from the Italian Defense General Staff, and Luigi Scotto and Stefano Mauri from the MFA's Africa bureau.

[1](#)4. (SBU) The purpose of the meeting was to discuss expediting Italian status of forces-type agreements with the African host countries. The Italians have prepared diplomatic notes that are very similar to those used by the U.S. (copy of Italian draft faxed to EUR/WE) but that will be limited to the time that Italian forces will be in each country. The Italians are concerned, however, that the host governments will not conclude these exchanges in a timely manner. (Note. Italian forces are scheduled to depart Naples on October 1. End note.) The Italians therefore requested that the U.S. Embassies in Abuja, Accra, Conakry, Dakar, and Rabat help facilitate these agreements by explaining to local authorities that the Italian forces will be participating in a U.S.-led military training exercise. According to the MFA, this will avoid having Italy "start from scratch" in concluding their bilateral agreement with each country.

[1](#)5. (U) For its part, the MFA will alert its Embassy in Washington to this issue as well as the relevant African Embassies in Rome. After coordinating with the U.S. Embassy in each African host country, the respective Italian Embassies will then contact the local authorities to begin the bilateral exchange of diplomatic notes. (Note. Italy's situation is complicated by the fact that it does not have a diplomatic mission in Guinea. Italy's Embassy in Dakar will handle the exchange of notes with Conakry. Furthermore, Italy's Military Attache in Morocco is responsible for Senegal, and Italy has no Defense Attaches in Guinea or Ghana. End note.)

Background

[1](#)6. (U) The WATC exercise is a MARFOREUR/NAVEUR-sponsored amphibious exercise that will take place from October-December 2005 designed to increase the tactical and operational capabilities of multiple West African and Gulf of Guinea nations' amphibious forces. Exercises will be held in Ghana, Guinea, Morocco, Nigeria, and Senegal with the participation of local military forces. An invitation was extended to Italy to participate by U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe in February. Italy plans to send 63 personnel from the army's Serenissima regiment and the navy's San Marco regiment. The Italians view this exercise as an excellent opportunity not only for bilateral training with U.S. and other troops, but also for improved cooperation between its own forces. (Note. This will be the first time the Serenissima and San Marco forces participate together in an amphibious training exercise. End note.) Spanish forces also will participate in the exercise. In addition, the Italian,

Spanish, and U.S. forces participating in WATC also will take part in the UK-led exercise Green Osprey in Senegal. The Netherlands and Norway will also participate in this exercise.

17. (SBU) Action requested. Post requests that Department ask Embassies Abuja, Accra, Conakry, Dakar, and Rabat, after discussing with their Italian counterparts, where possible, to contact the appropriate host government officials to notify them of the forthcoming Italian request for an exchange of diplomatic notes, to explain that these agreements are to allow Italian forces to participate in the US-led WATC exercise, and to request that the host governments expedite conclusion of the agreements.

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